

*Theatre Upgrades are Central to Broader Downtown
Economic Development Strategy*

Binghamton, NY - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today announced that he has secured a key House panel's approval of a substantial federal investment in repairs and upgrades to the Broome County Forum. Hinchey secured the \$750,000 investment for the theatre, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, from the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior and Environment of which he is a senior member. Broome County Executive Barbara Fiala and downtown Binghamton Business leaders joined Hinchey for the announcement.

"The Broome County Forum is playing a key role in our effort to deliver cultural and artistic opportunities, which are helping drive forward the rebirth of Binghamton's downtown," said Hinchey. "The theater is an invaluable architectural treasure that plays host to the area's premier acts, including the Binghamton Philharmonic Orchestra, the Tri-Cities Opera, the Broadway Theater League and various dance groups. With this federal investment, the upgrades and repairs that are needed to ensure the continued successful operation of the theatre will move forward. It's an essential piece of a broader strategy to revive the downtown area."

Broome County has identified a range of improvements that are needed at the Forum, including the restoration of the theatre's facade, improvements and equipment for the stage, new seating, and a new Marquee. The investment for which Hinchey has secured initial approval, combined with an identical amount in matching funds from the county, will allow many of these projects to move forward.

"We are delighted with this demonstration of financial support for our cherished Forum Theatre," said Executive Fiala. "Congressman Hinchey was apprised of our plans to rehabilitate our theatre's interior and exterior. He has gone to great lengths to help us secure the necessary funds to restore this beautiful, historic building in the core of our downtown and in the heart of our arts community! We appreciate all that he has done to date to move this project forward."

A primary element of the City of Binghamton's strategy to revive its once vibrant downtown area is to draw in painters, performers, photographers and other artists to establish a range of

galleries, shops and attractions. Upgrading the Forum Theatre will create a hub for cultural and artistic activities in the downtown area, draw new visitors and offer broad economic benefits.

“Here’s another example of Maurice listening to the needs of the downtown business community,” stated Ron Sall, President of the Downtown Binghamton Business Association and member of the Broome Arena and Forum’s Board of Directors. “It’s gratifying to see this project move forward and I thank the Congressman and our County Executive for ensuring that the Forum Theatre gets the attention it deserves.”

Hinchey has delivered a range of projects to help restore Binghamton's downtown. Using his seat on the House Appropriations Committee, Hinchey secured \$4.1 million to help establish a new Broome County Intermodal bus terminal, which will soon be completely up and running. In 2005, he secured \$4 million to revitalize the Front Street gateway to the city. In 2009, the congressman secured \$250,000 in federal funding for the new Boys & Girls Club facility in Binghamton, New York.